UNITED NATIONS

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General Assembly

PROVISIONAL

A/S-18/PV.1
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ENGLISH

Eighteenth special session

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FIRST MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Monday, 23 April 1990, at 9.30 a.m.

President: Mr. GARBA (Nigeria)

- Opening of the session by the Chairman of the delegation of Nigeria
- Minute of silent prayer or meditation
- Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations
- Credentials of representatives to the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly

  (a) Appointment of members of the Credentials Committee
- Election of the President of the General Assembly

/...

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- Address by Mr. Joseph N. Garba, President of the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session

- Report of the Preparatory Committee for the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly

- Organization of the session

- Adoption of the agenda

- Admission of new members to the United Nations [10]

  (a) Letter from the President of the Security Council

  (b) Draft resolution

- Statement by the Secretary-General

- General debate [8 and 9]

The meeting was called to order at 9.45 a.m.

ITEM 1 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

OPENING OF THE SESSION BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DELEGATION OF NIGERIA

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I declare open the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries.

ITEM 2 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

MINUTE OF SILENT PRAYER OR MEDITATION

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/S-18/8)

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: Before turning to the next item on our agenda, I should like, in keeping with the established practice, to invite the attention of the General Assembly to document A/S-18/8, which contains a letter addressed to me by the Secretary-General in which he informs the Assembly that 10 Member States are in arrears in the payment of their financial contributions to the United Nations within the terms of Article 19 of the Charter.

I should like to remind delegations that, under Article 19 of the Charter,

"A Member of the United Nations which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the General Assembly if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years."

(The Temporary President)

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of this information?

It was so decided.

ITEM 3 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

CREDENTIALS OF REPRESENTATIVES TO THE EIGHTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(a) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: We shall now proceed with the appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee.

Rule 28 of the rules of procedure provides that the General Assembly at the beginning of each session shall appoint, on the proposal of the President, a Credentials Committee consisting of nine members.

The Preparatory Committee of the Whole for this special session of the General Assembly devoted to international co-operation has made a number of recommendations in paragraphs 30 and 32 of its report (A/S-18/7).

I invite members to turn their attention to the recommendation concerning the appointment of the Credentials Committee.

In accordance with precedents, and taking into account the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee, I would propose that the Credentials Committee of the eighteenth special session should be the same as that of the forty-fourth regular session of the Assembly, namely Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, China, Colombia, Malawi, the Philippines, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and Zaire.

If there is no objection, I shall consider the Credentials Committee constituted accordingly.

It was so decided.

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The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: In this connection, may I invite the attention of the members of the Assembly to a note verbale from the Secretary-General, dated 2 April 1990, in which it was stated that credentials should be issued for all representatives to the special session, in accordance with rule 27 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. I would urge all members to submit the credentials of representatives to the Secretary-General as soon as possible.

ITEM 4 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I now invite the Assembly to proceed to the election of the President of the General Assembly. In this connection, the Preparatory Committee recommends that the special session should take place under the presidency of the President of the forty-fourth regular session, Mr. Joseph Nanven Garba of Nigeria.

I take it that the Assembly wishes to elect him President of the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT: I extend my sincere congratulations to Mr. Garba and invite him to assume the presidency.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the President to the podium.

Mr. Garba took the Chair.

ADDRESS BY MR. JOSEPH N. GARBA, PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT ITS EIGHTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION

The PRESIDENT: I must express the profound appreciation of my country, Nigeria, and my personal gratitude to the Member States of the Assembly for electing me to preside over this special session. The confidence reposed in me by the international community continues to be a source of satisfaction and challenge to me.

Today we meet to undertake two important assignments: the admission of Namibia and the beginning of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly. There has been much change in the world since we decided here to convene this special session. It has been breathtaking change. Sometimes the scope and direction of that change, and often its speed, has been unforeseen. We have saluted new democracies in Eastern Europe and southern Africa as well as the pledges of support to the fledgling democracies. Among the wondrous transformations of the world in recent months was the birth of a new nation in Africa.

Namibia, the country that we are about to welcome as the 160th Member State of the United Nations, will for ever remind us that usually even the most intractable problems can be solved when all concerned States and interests muster sufficient political will and co-operate in good faith, as envisaged in the United Nations Charter.

This year, 1990, has been remarkable. Certainly we are entering the new decade with enormous hopes, that the easing of tensions and disarmament will open up opportunities for dialogue and co-operation on the critical problems of the world economy, and that development will become a priority on the international agenda. Our assembling here today is, therefore, an open and profound expression of our collective hopes.

(The President)

As our Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, underlined in January at the Moscow Global Forum on Environment and Development for Survival,

"we have to act on the realization that security has economic and social dimensions no less demanding of attention than its political and military ones."

This is, admittedly, a complex and difficult agenda. It implies eliminating economic and social conditions that might generate conflict and insecurity for all. It means, further, that the peace and security purposes of the United Nations, as expressed in Article 1 of the Charter, will also be pursued through international co-operation to solve the most urgent development problems.

The opportunity to understand the interdependence of the world and to build a future that is beneficial to all mankind is before us. But this opportunity gives us almost daunting responsibilities.

The difficulties that led us to convene this special session - devoted to international economic co-operation and in particular the revitalization of the economic growth and development of developing countries - remain unresolved. As was stated very pointedly at the last session of the General Assembly, if we had sufficient and balanced growth of the world economy there would be no need for a special session devoted to growth and development. Through this special session we want to give an impulse to international economic co-operation in order to overcome the slowdown of the world economy in the 1980s and the dual-track development that has left the majority of developing countries with retarded economies.

Even for the world economy as a whole the aggregate growth record of the 1980s was lower than in the two previous decades. In addition, growth differentials have become larger. The developing countries bore the brunt of the decline in growth during the 1980s, and the gap between developed and developing countries has

(The President)

increased. The most sombre aspect of this reality is that it is not merely past history, and we are alarmed that most of the forecasts for the 1990s are for much of the same. The prospect of another decade of stagnation in most developing countries must therefore be a matter of grave concern for the international community.

The developments in Eastern Europe represent a step further towards the integration and interdependence of the world economy. International co-operation is confronted with the additional responsibility of helping fledgling democracies to overcome their economic woes. Understandably, some concern has been voiced about the short-term economic repercussions of a possible diversion of finance, markets, investments and attention away from developing countries. No one can be sure of the answers at this moment. However, as the economies of the countries of Eastern Europe recover, their integration into the world economy will provide new impulses to trade and growth from which developing countries might benefit.

There are other potential benefits. Developments in Eastern Europe, while constituting one element in a broader picture of the slowing down of the arms race, are also part of a scenario in which increasing resources should be released from military budgets and shifted towards social expenditures and development.

Such a shift in expenditures and other sound domestic measures are expected from all countries, including the developing countries. It is recognized that for any country - developed or developing - to succeed it has to rely on adequate domestic policies, on liberating and mobilizing the initiative and the savings of its own private sector, on programmes to increase the competitiveness of its agriculture, industry and services in the international markets, and on control of the inflationary vogue or tendencies that, in various countries, have left State budgets out of control. There are no doubt changed perceptions on the relative

(The President)

economic role of the private and the public sectors and the need to streamline the State. And there is certainly a need to link development to poverty alleviation, to human resources development, to the enhancement of human rights, to scientific and technological progress and to the protection of our physical environment. For such domestic policies to be feasible, they have to be able to mobilize their own internal system of political support on a democratic basis - from the grassroots to the leadership.

(The President)

And yet, sound domestic policies are no longer sufficient - if they ever were. For better or for worse, interdependence and integration have made nations more vulnerable to distortions, uncertainties and brisk alterations in the international economic environment. But, obviously, interdependence has its drawbacks. For all countries it imposes limits on the effectiveness of domestic policy alone. But these limits are not the same for all countries. The economic weight of a few countries is such that the reverse condition prevails, and the impact of their domestic policies overflows their borders affecting the global international environment. The reason for domestic adjustment then is not the same as for vulnerable countries, namely the need to adapt to an unfavourable international environment, but it is, on the contrary, the need to avoid transborder consequences unfavourable to the international economic environment.

The realities of interdependence are such that growth and development in developing countries cannot recover without increased international economic co-operation. Such co-operation is needed to redress the development losses of the 1980s that came about through a particular conjunction of unfavourable external factors.

These interrelated and mutually reinforcing factors - the high level of previously accumulated debt; the sudden rise in, and overall the unprecedented levels of, interest rates in the 1980s; the drying up of new finance from private sources since 1982; the deterioration in terms of trade of developing countries and their inability to increase exports to cope with the rapid rise in debt service - all these factors together have brought us to debt levels that developing countries are simply unable to repay in the original conditions in which these debts were contracted. And this has been recognized since 1989 by the Brady initiative, which favoured debt reduction.

(The President)

I welcomed this shift in international policy towards debt reduction at the opening of the last session of the General Assembly. For many indebted countries, the mobilization of domestic resources required by the presence of a net negative transfer on account of financial flows is beyond economic feasibility with any given set of domestic policies. The Brady initiative has to be extended to more countries and deepened, before growth and development can be restored in most developing countries. Debt reduction becomes therefore even more necessary at a moment in which a worrying upward pressure on interest rates in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries might reduce the effect of painstakingly negotiated debt reduction accords.

One word only on the importance of external finance to support developing countries in their development efforts. It cannot be limited to a solution for the debt crisis. A large impulse would accrue to developing countries if the recommended target of 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product for official development assistance could be implemented by all. The special official development assistance target is even more justified in the case of the least developed countries. And those countries that have reached and even surpassed this target have to be praised for their developmental responsibility and certainly their solidarity.

It is my sincere belief that an improved market access or the further opening up of world markets, in particular for products from developing countries, is another important development issue. International trade has an increasing role in generating growth. This is true for all groups of countries, but even more so for the economically weaker countries. On this front also, there are multiple signs on how necessary integrated and co-ordinated international action has become. Import contraction spreads the effects of the debt crisis to the trade partners of the indebted countries. Just to give the Assembly one instance presented by the

(The President)

Director-General of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), between 1981 and 1986, while world trade increased by 7.5 per cent, the imports of the 16 most heavily indebted countries declined by almost a quarter.

With seven months to go before the completion of the Uruguay Round of trade negotiations, it is imperative to emphasize the importance of results in the market access area. This means not only reduction of tariffs - and above all non-tariff barriers in particular for tropical products; but it also means the elimination of tariff escalations that do not favour diversification of the exports of developing countries; it means bringing back to the discipline of multilateral GATT rules sectors such as textiles and clothing, as well as agricultural goods, and also the multiplicity of gray area arrangements in steel, cars, electronics and machine tools, that put an unfair burden on the exports of the most competitive among developing countries. Additionally, it means concerted efforts to stabilize commodity prices before diversification can take care of all other export difficulties. It equally means undertaking special support measures for products of particular export interest to the least developed countries. But most of all it means reinforcing multilateralism against the danger of arbitrary and unilateral action, and the establishment of predictable and equitable rules and conditions for competition.

Much work went into the preparation of this special session. Mindful of the manpower hours expended so far in the preparations, I am particularly grateful to Ambassador Zepos, Permanent Representative of Greece to the United Nations and Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, for his persistent efforts to build a common understanding and a common ground for action. I am also grateful to all Member States, and particularly to the Secretariat, for the co-operation extended to him. I will not dwell further on all the major and complex development issues. Suffice it, however, to say that they are amply identified in a host of documents that have

(The President)

been so ably prepared by the Secretariat, and that we have indeed been actively discussing during the past months. I do not for one moment deny that there are other major areas in need of international co-operation, such as the protection of human rights, to which I have made mention, the fight against hunger, poverty and disease, famine and the protection of the environment. My remarks derive from my personal conviction that many of these problems have their origin in and are intertwined with the lack of development, particularly in the developing countries.

Let me conclude by reiterating my wishes for the restoration of a pragmatic and productive development dialogue in the United Nations. The complexity and gravity of development problems can only be solved through complementary domestic and international action. Economic issues have not only become more interrelated themselves, they have become more political and more intertwined with social and environmental issues. It bears repeating: they have also become linked to the construction of a future that is peaceful and secure for all nations and all peoples. The chances are there for the construction of a better world for all of us. I have no doubt that members are all resolute in their determination to achieve that noble objective.

AGENDA ITEMS 5 AND 6

REPORT OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE EIGHTEENTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (A/S-18/7)

ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

The PRESIDENT: We turn now to the next order of business - the report of the Preparatory Committee for the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, contained in parts I and II of document A/S-18/7, and the organization of the session.

In this connection I call on the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, Mr. Constantine Zepos of Greece.

Mr. ZEPOS (Greece), Chairman of the Preparatory Committee of the Whole: I have the honour to present to the General Assembly the report of the Preparatory Committee of the Whole for the eighteenth special session devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries, issued as document A/S-18/7, parts I and II.

The Preparatory Committee held its first session from 31 May to 2 June 1989, its second session from 26 February to 2 March 1990 and its third session from 16 to 20 April 1990. The decisions and recommendations of the Preparatory Committee to the General Assembly are contained in section IV of part I of the report and section V of part II of the report. The Preparatory Committee submits a text as a basis for the preparation of the final document of the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session, contained in paragraph 33, on pages 8 through 15 of part II of the report. The Preparatory Committee also submits a compilation of proposals for the introduction to the final document, contained in paragraph 33, on pages 14 to 19 of part II of the report.

The PRESIDENT: I thank very warmly the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for his report. The General Assembly is grateful to him, and to those who participated in the Preparatory Committee, for their efforts to expedite our work, and in particular to get the special session off to a good start.

May I take it that the General Assembly endorses the report of the Preparatory Committee for the eighteenth special session, document A/S-18/7, and the recommendations contained in paragraphs 30 and 32, as a whole?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: On the basis of the decisions just taken by the General Assembly and the practice of previous special sessions, the Chairmen of the Main

(The President)

Committees of the forty-fourth regular session would serve in the same capacity at the eighteenth special session. Accordingly, I should like to inform the Assembly that the following Chairmen are present at this special session: the Chairman of the Special Political Committee, His Excellency Mr. Guennadi Oudovenko of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic; the Chairman of the Second Committee, His Excellency Mr. Ahmed Ghezal of Tunisia; the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, His Excellency Mr. Robert Van Lierop of Vanuatu; the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Fathi Al-Masri of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In paragraph 30 of the report of the Preparatory Committee, which was endorsed by the Assembly, it was recommended that the Chairmen of the Main Committees may be replaced by members of their delegations or members of the delegations of States belonging to the same regional group. Accordingly, the following replacements have been communicated to the Secretariat: for the Chairman of the First Committee, His Excellency Mr. Andres Aguilar of Venezuela; for the Chairman of the Third Committee, His Excellency Mr. Gaetan Rimwanguiya Ouedraogo of Burkina Faso; for the Chairman of the Sixth Committee, Mr. Thomas Hajnoczi of Austria.

The Vice-Presidents of the forty-fourth regular session who will serve in the same capacity at the eighteenth special session are the representatives of the following Member States: Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Brunei Darussalam, China, Congo, Costa Rica, France, Gambia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Luxembourg, Morocco, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Sudan, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America and Zimbabwe.

In endorsing the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee the Assembly has established an ad hoc committee of the whole, which will be designated as Ad Hoc Committee of the eighteenth special session.

(The President)

In accordance with the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee will be a full member of the General Committee of the eighteenth special session.

Concerning the election of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Preparatory Committee recommends that the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, His Excellency Mr. Constantine Zepos of Greece, should serve in the same capacity in the Ad Hoc Committee.

I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly at its eighteenth special session to elect him by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Constantine Zepos on behalf of the General Assembly and on my own behalf and wish him well in the important and onerous responsibilities that he has just assumed.

The General Committee of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly has now been fully constituted.

On the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee, the General Assembly has just decided that, on the basis of specific requests, observer non-member States should be invited to participate in the general debate in plenary meeting.

I would like to inform members that the Observers of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Holy See, the Republic of Korea and Switzerland have asked to take part in the general debate in plenary meeting.

May I take it that the Assembly agrees to invite those four Observers to participate in the general debate in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: On the basis of the decisions just taken by the General Assembly on the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, the executive heads

(The President)

of the United Nations specialized agencies concerned shall also be invited to participate in the general debate in plenary meeting, on condition that each statement shall not exceed 10 minutes.

On the basis of the decisions just taken on the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, interested intergovernmental organizations that have received a standing invitation to participate in the special session and the work of the General Assembly shall be invited to participate in the general debate in plenary meeting. Each statement shall not exceed 10 minutes.

On the basis of the decision just taken by the General Assembly on the recommendations of the Preparatory Committee, a representative of one non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council may address the Ad Hoc Committee on behalf of interested non-governmental organizations. Such statements shall not exceed 10 minutes.

The Preparatory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should take a decision to invite, on the basis of specific requests, other relevant intergovernmental and interregional organizations of an economic nature to participate and speak on an ad hoc basis during the session. Such statements should not exceed 10 minutes.

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts those recommendations?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: It is proposed that these organizations may be heard in the Ad Hoc Committee.

May I take it that the Assembly approves that proposal?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: In view of the large number of representatives whose names have already been inscribed in the list of speakers, it is proposed that plenary meetings should start punctually at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

In this connection, I should like to assure the Assembly that I shall be in the Chair punctually at the scheduled time. I sincerely hope that all delegations will make a special effort to co-operate in this regard, as indeed they have done at previous sessions.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Furthermore, it is proposed that, owing to time constraints, the length of statements, with the exception of those by the Heads of State or Government, should be limited to 15 minutes. A white flashing light will be activated at the rostrum to let the speaker know that the 15-minute limit has elapsed.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly approves that proposal.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I indicated earlier that statements by executive heads of specialized agencies and by intergovernmental organizations with a standing invitation to participate in the work of the Assembly would be limited to 10 minutes.

ITEM 7 OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (A/S-18/6)

The PRESIDENT: The draft agenda of the eighteenth special session consists of the nine items of the provisional agenda recommended by the Preparatory Committee and a supplementary item, entitled "Admission of new Members to the United Nations", requested by the Security Council. In order to expedite our work the Assembly may wish to consider the draft agenda in plenary meeting, without referring it to the General Committee.

May I take it that the General Assembly agrees to that procedure?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Regarding the allocation of items, on the recommendation of the Preparatory Committee the General Assembly has just decided to allocate agenda item 9 to the Ad Hoc Committee; it has also decided that item 9 should also be considered by the General Assembly in plenary meetings under agenda item 8, "general debate".

Furthermore, may I take it that, bearing in mind the General Assembly's practice, it is the Assembly's wish to consider item 10 directly in plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: By adopting the report of the Preparatory Committee, the Assembly endorsed the provisional agenda contained therein, which consists of nine items.

The draft agenda as it appears in document A/S-18/6 includes a supplementary item, entitled "Admission of new Members to the United Nations", requested by the Security Council.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly wishes to adopt the draft agenda as it appears in document A/S-18/6 and now consisting of 10 items.

The agenda was adopted.

The PRESIDENT: With the permission of the General Assembly, I should like to proceed now to the consideration of agenda item 10, "Admission of new Members to the United Nations", in order to give the new Member the opportunity to participate from the outset in the work of the special session.

AGENDA ITEM 10

ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBERS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

(a) LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL (A/S-18/3)

(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/S-18/L.1)

The PRESIDENT: The Security Council has recommended, in document A/S-18/3, the admission of the Republic of Namibia to membership in the United Nations. In this connection, a draft resolution has been submitted in document A/S-18/L.1. In addition to the countries listed in that document, the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Belize, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Chile, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mongolia, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Saint Lucia and Saudi Arabia.

May I take it that the General Assembly adopts the draft resolution by acclamation?

Draft resolution A/S-18/L.1 was adopted (resolution S-18/1).

The PRESIDENT: I therefore have the honour to declare the Republic of Namibia admitted to membership in the United Nations.

I request the Chief of Protocol to escort the delegation of Namibia to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The delegation of Namibia was escorted to its place in the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: We have just witnessed a truly historic moment: the admission of Namibia as the one hundred and sixtieth Member State of the United Nations. It is a special occasion for the United Nations each time a new State is admitted. The case of Namibia, however, is unique, since its independence is in part the brainchild of the United Nations. Namibia's accession to independent nationhood and its entry in the United Nations is therefore a victory for the international community as a whole: for the people of Namibia as well as for the United Nations.

(The President)

It is my honour and privilege on this occasion to welcome the Republic of Namibia into the United Nations. I wish to pay a warm tribute to the entire people of Namibia and in particular to His Excellency President Sam Nujoma and his colleagues of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), who have waged a historic struggle to vindicate the claim and right of Namibians to self-determination.

This is also a moment to pay a tribute to the United Nations. Our Organization inherited the League of Nations Mandate over Namibia and has since its establishment worked tirelessly to help the people of Namibia achieve its independent nationhood. All of the main organs of the United Nations have played their part - from the General Assembly to the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice and the Secretariat. When the moment became necessary, in 1966, the General Assembly took the remarkable step of assuming direct responsiblity for the administration of Namibia.

Thereafter, the Council for Namibia and a succession of United Nations Commissioners played a pivotal role in the discharge of the responsibilities of the United Nations for the administration of the Territory. Our appreciation is therefore also due to the Council for Namibia and to each of the Commissioners, the late Mr. Sean MacBride, Mr. Marti Ahtisaari, Mr. Brajesh Mishra and the late Mr. Brent Carlson, who, the General Assembly will recall, gave his life in the course of the discharge of his duties.

A special tribute is also due today to our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who, just a few days after his assumption of office, emphasized his determination to work tirelessly for the independence of Namibia. It was, therefore, with great pride, Sir, that we read your report to the Security Council in which you informed the Council that:

(The President)

"On 22 March 1990 the South African Administrator-General, Advocate Louis Peinaar, left Namibia and was seen off by President Nujoma."

Mr. Secretary-General, you have earned the gratitude of the people of Namibia and of the international community for your personal efforts to bring Namibia to independence. In acknowledging your role today, I should like also to commend all the members of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), particularly your Special Representative for Namibia, Mr. Ahtisaari, his Deputy, Ambassador Legwaila of Botswana, and the Force Commander of UNTAG, General Pren Chand, as well as all those States that contributed personnel and resources to UNTAG.

But I would be failing in my duty today if I did not pay a very special and particular tribute to my own continent, Africa, which has shown such determined solidarity to bring about the results we are celebrating today. The Organization of African Unity and its member States, particularly the front-line States, gave their unstinting support to the struggle of the Namibian people. The front-line States, in particular, paid a heavy price for their commitment to the principles of equality and self-determination in Namibia. For me personally, this long-awaited moment is most gratifying, as I was one of the African Foreign Minister who was lucky enough to help negotiate Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The privilege of being part of the final actualization of resolution 435 (1978) has been, to say the least, most enriching and, indeed, most satisfying for me.

As I said earlier, Namibia will forever remind us of what can be achieved when there is political will among nations. The settlement leading to the independence of Namibia required that political will as well as great negotiating skills on the part of the members of the Security Council, the final Contact Group on Namibia, the Secretary-General and other leading negotiators, such as United States Assistant Secretaries of State Mr. Chester Crocker and Mr. Herman Cohen. It is

(The President)

fitting that I should acknowledge today the contribution of all of those people for their roles.

As Namibia joins the United Nations, I should like to make a solemn appeal to all members of the international community to assist and support this new nation. Namibia has shown that the path is open to negotiation for the achievement of a multi-racial society committed to democracy, the rule of law and respect for inalienable human rights, ordered liberties and fundamental freedoms. It is my sincere hope that, as we celebrate the admission of Namibia to the United Nations, we shall recommit ourselves to the immediate, swift and total eradication of the abhorrent apartheid system in South Africa.

On behalf of the General Assembly, and on my own behalf, I should like to reiterate my congratualtions to the new Member State, the Republic of Namibia. I ask the Prime Minister of Namibia to convey to his compatriots our warmest felicitations and best wishes always. Long live the Republic fo Namibia.

I now have the honour and the privilege to call on the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, who wishes to address the General Assembly on this important occasion.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: It is with considerable emotion and pride that I welcome the independent State of Namibia to membership of the United Nations. In doing so, I should like to say how happy I am that Prime Minister Geingob and Foreign Minister Ben-Gurirab are here today. It is a special pleasure for me to see you, Sir, a distinguished son of Africa, presiding over this moving session of the General Assembly.

Decades of struggle and sacrifice by the Namibian people and its political leadership, and decades of support by the international community, have made this very happy occasion possible. In the course of the process that has ensued, the world Organization developed a very special bond with the people of Namibia. It is

(The Secretary-General)

therefore a source of exceptional satisfaction in this house that they were finally able to exercise their right to self-determination in accordance with Security Council resolution 435 (1978) and that the new State is now taking its rightful place in the community of nations. Just as, over the past month, the entire world community has rejoiced with the people of Namibia in its accession to independence, so, in the period ahead, the Government of Namibia, led by its President, Mr. Sam Nujoma, must receive the support of the international community in the great task of nation building.

None of us will have failed to note that the constructive atmosphere that attended Namibia's final steps to independence holds significant lessons not only for the region, but more broadly.

The success of the United Nations operation in Namibia has encouraged other parties to call for similar peace-making and peace-keeping assistance in their regions. It is of course an essential part of the responsibility of the United Nations to help resolve regional conflicts. However, I cannot overemphasize the fact that, to do so effectively, the Organization must be given clear mandates, adequate resources and solid and consistent co-operation by all sides.

(The Secretary-General)

The independence of Namibia and its admission to the United Nations has taken place at a moment of great and creative change in world affairs. Old confrontations are crumbling and the search for a new harmony is visible in several of the areas that have been most plagued by conflict in recent decades. Opportunities abound. For its part, the United Nations - inspired by Namibia's admission to our ranks - looks to these emerging global opportunities with renewed hope and confidence.

In conclusion, may I ask Prime Minister Geingob to extend to President Nujoma and to the Government and the people of Namibia our renewed congratulations. I wish to assure them of the continued support and understanding of this Organization.

The PRESIDENT: Several representatives have expressed a desire to speak on this occasion. Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to appeal to representatives for their co-operation in limiting their statements to five minutes. We do have a lengthy agenda before us.

I now have the honour and pleasure to call on the first speaker, His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa of Egypt, who will speak on behalf of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. MOUSSA (Egypt) (interpretation from Arabic): It gives me great pleasure at this time of momentous events to express, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity and its Chairman, our congratulations to the people and the Government of Namibia on Namibia's admission to membership of the United Nations.

On behalf of the Organization of African Unity I should like to express our gratitude to the international community for its support for that historic struggle and for its celebration of this important occasion. The independence of Namibia has been a cherished cause for which we struggled over a long period of time.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

Today the culmination of that struggle marks a glorious chapter of all our efforts at the national, regional and international levels. Every effort was exerted in order to achieve this cherished goal, which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter, namely, to ensure the right of every people to self-determination, and to ensure that all peoples have equal rights.

In celebrating this occasion, we recall with appreciation and admiration the struggle of the people of Namibia, carried out and led with national dedication, determination and efficiency by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). We also recall the support given by Africa as a whole, in particular the front-line States, and by the international community at large on behalf of that struggle.

It is my duty on this occasion to express our gratitude to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and to the competent team that assisted him in implementing the United Nations plan up to the achievement of independence by Namibia. We also express our appreciation to the United Nations Council for Namibia for its vital role in that process. There is no doubt that the outstanding performance carried out under the flag of the United Nations will contribute to strengthening belief in the role of the United Nations and its crucial importance in resolving outstanding regional and international problems.

While we are celebrating the fall of the last bastion of colonialism and foreign occupation in Africa, we look forward to the day when we shall see Africa totally free, the day when the people of South Africa will also achieve their undeniable and inalienable rights.

I should like now to read out a message from President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, Chairman of the Organization of African Unity.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

"It gives me great pleasure to extend, on behalf of all Africa, our most sincere congratulations on the admission of sister Namibia to membership in the United Nations. The independence of Namibia, which is a triumph for the principles of the United Nations and the values for which it stands, culminates the great sacrifices made by the people of Namibia, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization and President Sam Nujoma. That competent and wise leadership is a source of pride for all Africa.

"The African family takes pride in the admission of Namibia to membership in the United Nations and believes that the independence of Namibia is a supplementary step on the road towards the total independence of Africa and the freedom of Namibia is a consolidation of Africa's freedom. The crucial role played by the United Nations in the independence of Namibia and the strong unwavering support by the international community to the cause of freedom in Namibia is an outstanding healthy sign that now marks the international life today. It also underscores the importance of the United Nations as an instrument of great human value which embodies the spirit of integration and co-operation to advance the cause of peace, development and progress.

"Africa appeals to the world community to extend every possible assistance to the people of Namibia in order to consolidate Namibian independence and to provide international aid to the projects and programmes aimed at the rebuilding and strengthening of the economy of the newly born State.

"Long live independent Namibia. Long live Africa's march towards a hopeful, valiant and vigorous future."

The PRESIDENT: I call on His Excellency Mr.Noumou Diakite, representative of Mali, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mr. DIAKITE (Mali) (interpretation from French): Mr. President, the Group of African States at the United Nations, which I have the honour to chair this month, wishes to convey to you its warmest congratulations and great joy at seeing you presiding over the work of this eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries.

The admission of Namibia as the one hundred and sixtieth Member of our Organization under your presidency has a symbolic value. You represent a country, Nigeria, which has made the total liberation of the African continent one of the cardinal principles of its foreign policy. An avowed militant for the rights of people to self-determination, you have, yourself, first as Foreign Minister of your country and later as Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, vigorously fought against the policy of apartheid of the South African Government and its illegal occupation of Namibia.

The Group of African States at the United Nations bids welcome to the Republic of Namibia and assures it of its total solidarity. This admission to membership, which takes place one month after that country acceded to independence, is the crowning achievement of the long struggle of the Namibian people against foreign domination. It is also the direct result of 30 years of struggle for national liberation waged by the courageous Namibian people, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). This is therefore the appropriate occasion to pay tribute to the men and women who fell on the field of honour; their sacrifice enables us today to feel these deep emotions.

(Mr. Diakite, Mali)

In accordance with the goals set forth by the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, Africa in general and the front-line States in particular have unreservedly supported the just struggle of the Namibian people. Africa is pleased with the assistance that the international community has given the Namibian people in its national liberation struggle.

The pressures brought to bear on South Africa by many States Members of our Organization, by the General Assembly, the Security Council, the International Court of Justice, the Special Committee against Apartheid, and the United Nations Committee on Decolonization, together with the struggle of the Namibian people, compelled the leaders of Pretoria to discover the virtues of negotiation, thus making possible the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

The Secretary-General, who knew how to utilize every situation, deserves our full recognition and gratitude. We wish personally to pay a well-deserved tribute to him, as well as to his team of assistants in Namibia and here in New York.

We find enormously comforting the admission of Namibia to the Organization by unanimous vote, since it is true that the young State will need international solidarity to revitalize its economy and to consolidate its independence. We call also for implementation of Security Council resolution 432 (1978) of 27 July 1978, which reaffirms that Walvis Bay and the offshore islands belong to the Namibian whole. Given the historic responsibility borne by the international community concerning Namibia, it is henceforth the duty of us all to work to bring about the territorial integrity and unity of the new State.

In conclusion, I wish to pay a well-deserved tribute to Mr. Sam Nujoma, the first President of the Republic of Namibia. A statesman who has embodied the aspirations of his people, who has been courageous and realistic throughout his long years of struggle, he deserves our admiration.

Mr. RANA (Nepal): On behalf of the Group of Asian States, I have the honour to welcome Namibia as a new member in this family of nations. While extending our fraternal felicitations to the people of Namibia, the Asian States share their pride and joy on this historic occasion.

Namibia's road to nationhood and independence has been long and arduous. The Group of Asian States pay the highest tribute to the Namibian people for their great courage, fortitude and sacrifice. Many freedom fighters laid down their lives to achieve the dream that is a reality today. The determination with which the people of Namibia waged their heroic struggle and the the dignity with which they conducted themselves during the transition period have earned them the admiration of the entire international community. Equally praiseworthy was the adoption of a constitution with a full guarantee for a pluralistic democratic society. This will remain a glowing testimony to the wisdom of the Namibian people, as well as to the vision, courage and statesmanship of leaders like President Sam Nujoma.

The United Nations had, since its inception, borne a special responsibility for Namibia. Together with the people of Namibia, we have shared moments of hope and despair. It is no accident that the final victory was achieved through free and fair elections under the supervision and control of the United Nations. The independence of Namibia is an example of what this Organization is capable of achieving given the co-operation of its members.

On this happy occasion I wish, on behalf of the Asian regional group, to pay special tribute to our Secretary-General for the perseverance and skill with which he implemented the mandate entrusted to him by the international community. It was not an easy task, and at times obstacles seemed insurmountable. We wish also to record our deep appreciation to his Special Representative, Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, who carried out a difficult task with such distinction. Our appreciation also goes to all those who served in the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)

(Mr. Rana, Nepal)

and discharged their duties with dedication. We applaud the United Nations Council for Namibia, which so ably represented the people of Namibia during the transitional period and assisted in the preparation of nationhood. The Asian countries have consistently supported and been closely involved in this process. The independence of Namibia and its admission to the United Nations is therefore a matter of special satisfaction to the continent of Asia, as well as to my own country, Nepal, which had the honour to co-ordinate the adoption of the resolution that initiated the implementation of the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia in the Security Council last year.

The emergence of Namibia as an independent and sovereign State is bound to have a profound impact, particularly on the ongoing struggle against the system of apartheid in South Africa. The members of the Asian Group warmly welcome this new nation in our midst and look forward to working in close co-operation with it.

Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): As Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States for this month, I wish to welcome you warmly, Sir, as President of this special session of the General Assembly and to wish you every success as you guide our work here. It is noteworthy that you, an outstanding representative of Africa, should be presiding over this session, which has just admitted to membership of our Organization the Republic of Namibia, whose people have won their long-awaited independence after more than 100 years of struggle against colonial oppression.

There is little need for me today to recall that the item on Namibia has been on the agenda of the United Nations for more than four decades. During the entire period of its existence, our Organization has consistently advocated immediate independence for the people of Namibia. It is indeed gratifying to see that these protracted efforts made by the international community have been crowned with success with the implementation of the plan for granting independence to Namibia through free and fair elections under United Nations supervision and control.

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

Namibia's independence was not only the result of the heroic national liberation struggle; it was also the culmination of the peace-making activities of the United Nations and its insistent and persistent efforts to ensure the legitimate rights of the Namibian people.

Settlement of the problem of Namibia is an impressive example of what the United Nations can do by way of resolving regional conflicts. The United Nations has demonstrated in practice that its mechanism for settling situations of conflict and maintaining the peace is an effective one and the most acceptable one today to ensure peace and security in the various parts of the planet Earth. It seems to us that greater use can and must be made of this potential of the United Nations to settle the most longstanding conflict, the Middle East conflict, along with the crux of that conflict, the question of Palestine, and to eliminate apartheid in South Africa.

Here we would pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for his efforts to promote a solution to the problem of Namibia. We would also note the important positive role played by the United Nations Council for Namibia, which for 23 years has been dealing with the many different problems of the Namibian people on a day-to-day basis.

A positive contribution was also made by the Organization of African States, by the front-line States and by all who participated in the 1988 New York agreements, which paved the way to unblocking the situation of conflict in South West Africa. In particular we should like to stress the role played by the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), headed by Sam Nujoma, which for more than 20 years led the struggle for the country's freedom. The people of Namibia demonstrated their appreciation of SWAPO's work when they expressed their confidence in it during the elections to the Constituent Assembly. We also extend

(Mr. Oudovenko, Ukrainian SSR)

our thanks to Mr. Martti Ahtisaari and his team and to General Prem Chand for carrying out their important work in leading Namibia to independence. We would also pay a tribute to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) and the countries of Eastern Europe who participated in its work.

As we celebrate the birth of this new State, this new Member of the United Nations, we once again turn our eyes to the historic Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It would be difficult to imagine an event more significant than the elimination of this last colony in Africa as we approach the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of that Declaration.

Namibian independence is indeed a historic triumph of justice, and further proof of the effectiveness of the new political thinking of today. We express our deep conviction that the Republic of Namibia will make a constructive contribution to the strenghtening of international co-operation, peace and security.

The East European States have always supported the legitimate and just struggle of the Namibian people for independence. Today we would assure the young independent State of our close co-operation with them. We wish the people of the Republic of Namibia every success as they build up their State and develop and consolidate their independence.

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of Venezuela, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. AGUILAR (Venezuela) (interpretation from Spanish): A long period of waiting preceded this happy occasion as we witness the admission of Namibia to membership of the United Nations. Many efforts had to be made to overcome the intolerance and selfishness of a few. The regional group I represent is proud to have been able to contribute to the defence and promotion of that noble cause since its inception, even before the norms leading to the right to self-determination and

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

independence of peoples had become firmly established in the minds and practice of some of the colonial Powers of the time. But the wave of independence that added so much to the world of the United Nations in the decades of the 1960s and 1970s did not include a Territory that perhaps more than any other had the best credentials to obtain early independence. It was only after a bitter protracted liberation struggle under the responsible leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), with the support and solidarity of the international community, that Namibia got itself back on the road to freedom.

A little over a year ago we saw with cautious hope the beginning of implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The coming together of a series of international factors seemed finally to be leading to a solution that would possibly bring about the redress of injustice, which had for so long been awaited by the Namibian people. Today the process of independence has ended and a new nation has joined the concert of sovereign nations.

The United Nations Council for Namibia has ended its work and is fast approaching its dissolution. Throughout its 23 years of work it has tirelessly contributed to the realization of the happy moment that has brought us together here today. Starting as a body with limited political scope, challenged and even underestimated, it went on to become a significant tool that denounced the situation and spread information on everything pertaining to the cause of Namibia. The nature of its responsibilities frequently brought it up against influential elements of the international equation, but it made no concessions with regard to its position of principle and nor did it abdicate the mandate the General Assembly had entrusted to it in resolution 2248 (S-V) of 19 May 1967.

Together with meeting its political responsibilities, the Council carried out important work in the field of training human resources and providing material

(Mr. Aguilar, Venezuela)

resources to the Namibian nation. Venezuela is certainly proud that over the last decade it has chaired the Committee of the United Nations Fund for Namibia, whose contribution in this area is of singular importance, given the developmental needs the new nation will face. The past leaves marks, and lessons are learned. The future offers challenges and hopes. Still unresolved are aspects having to do with Namibia's territorial integrity, in particular the question of Walvis Bay. Security Council resolution 432 (1978) recognizes the titles of sovereignty held by Namibia, and it is the international community's responsibility to ensure that that strategic enclave is returned to it as soon as possible without prejudice of any kind. It is important to point out that settlement of the Namibian question will be incomplete until that thorny matter has been resolved. In that regard, the international community's commitment still stands.

Though much has been done to create human resources to meet the imperatives of the social and economic reconstruction of Namibia, the facts show they are not sufficient. Namibia no longer exists only on paper as the subject of academic study by specialized agencies; Namibia now exists, which formulas for co-operation, bilateral or multilateral, must take into account. The Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries has already taken steps in that direction.

Our Group is pleased warmly to welcome Namibia to the Organization. We are convinced its contribution to our work will demonstrate all the creativity, generosity and solidarity we expect of it.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson of Sweden, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and Other States.

Mr. ELIASSON (Sweden): To welcome a new Member State to the United Nations is an occasion of joy, indeed an occasion of great pride for the world community.

Today, however, our rejoicing goes beyond the gratification of having seen the birth of a new nation. Another significant step has been taken towards the universality of our Organization. And we have seen the United Nations play a crucial and unprecedented role in the successful conclusion of the process of independence. All this constitutes a truly historic event.

Admitting Namibia as a Member State of the United Nations also marks the culmination of a long and sustained effort in the pursuit of freedom.

The people of Namibia have finally come to the end of their courageous and determined quest for freedom. There have been many sacrifices on the long and arduous road to independence. Today Namibia can proudly take its rightful place among the Member States of the United Nations.

The members of the Group of Western European and Other States congratulate the Namibian people on their great achievement and pay tribute to them for it. We also wish to express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and all the men and women of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) and the Secretariat who have worked so hard and skilfully for the success of one of the most complex and difficult operations ever undertaken by the Organization.

The independence of Namibia is a victory for Namibia and for Africa as a whole. But it is also a victory for the entire United Nations system. The Namibian experience has strengthened our Organization and the very principles of the Charter. In a powerful and convincing way, it proves that even the most

(Mr. Eliasson, Sweden)

intricate and deep-rooted problems can be resolved by political means It proves what can be achieved when the efforts of the parties concerned and the efforts of the world community are bound together by a common objective.

Namibia is, indeed, a symbol of the strength that lies in the will of the people and a symbol of the potential of peaceful change. What better start as a nation could the one hundred and sixtieth Member - or for that matter any Member - of our Organization have?

Namibia will no doubt make a great contribution to the work of the United Nations. Many of our Namibian friends know our Organization from first-hand experience. The members of the Group of Western European and Other States warmly welcome the delegation of Namibia. We look forward to working with its members both as old friends and as new colleagues facing the common task of promoting the noble aims and ideals embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Mohammad Hussain Al-Shaali of the United Arab Emirates, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates) (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the Group of Arab States, Mr. President, I wish to express our great pleasure in congratulating you on your election to preside over the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session. Your election on this day in particular is a reaffirmation of the trust placed in you by the international community and of your remarkable success in conducting the General Assembly's deliberations.

This is a historic day in the life and annals of the United Nations. This day, on which Namibia is admitted to membership of the international Organization, has particular significance, unlike that of the admission of any other State,

(Mr. Al-Shaali, United Arab Emirates)

because it marks the independence of the last colony on the continent of Africa and represents the culmination of a hard struggle waged by the people of Namibia, under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), against the racist colonialism of South Africa. It is also the culmination of the efforts made by the international community, represented by the United Nations and by all the forces of justice and peace which contributed directly or indirectly to the realization of the country's independence. Here mention should be made of the role of the Secretary-General, the African States, the Non-Aligned Movement and other organizations and individuals. What has happened today also reflects the importance of international détente in the settlement of regional conflicts.

We in the Arab Group feel particularly happy today because of our special historical ties with Africa throughout all the stages of the common struggle against colonialism. We congratulate this newly established State on its admission as a full Member of the United Nations and emphasize our support for its achievement of freedom and prosperity and the ability to play its role within the international community in the establishment of international peace and security.

At the same time, we look forward to the day when the people of Palestine achieve its independence and assumes its proper place amongst us in the United Nations, like all other peoples.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is His Excellency Mr. Tesfaye Tadesse of Ethiopia, Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

Mr. TADESSE (Ethiopia), Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman, Special Committee of 24)

Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Special Committee of 24): It is a particular pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over the Assembly on this auspicious occasion.

I feel a deep sense of joy in extending a most cordial welcome to the new independent State of the Republic of Namibia. The leaders of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the combatants of the liberation movement and the people of the new independent State of Africa can look with pride at this meeting of the General Assembly and the justly deserved investiture of the victory won through the toil and struggle they have endured over the past several decades.

Namibia's independence is a source of immense satisfaction and delight to the entire world community and in particular to the members of the Special Committee on decolonization, who over the years have followed closely often frustrating and at times even discouraging developments taking place in that region.

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman, Special Committee of 24)

Namibia's independence clearly demonstrates to the world that a colonial people fighting for its freedom cannot be silenced and that, against all odds, a just cause pursued with courage and determination will indeed triumph. The final victory of Namibia is a tribute to the indomitable will of its people, as well as the resilience, foresight and statesmanship of the leaders of SWAPO, the national liberation movement, at the negotiating table as much as on the battlefield.

When I had the honour of representing the Special Committee at the official independence celebration ceremonies at Windhoek, I had the opportunity of conveying to the Government and, through it to the people, of Namibia the Special Committee's warmest congratulations and best wishes for peace, happiness and prosperity in the years to come. But Namibia needs more than the good wishes of all nations. A tremendous effort of national reconstruction will engage all the energies of the entire population, and I need not stress the responsibility of the international community, of the United Nations and its family of organizations, to extend their help most generously and give this new nation all the assistance it needs to rehabilitate its refugees, rebuild its economy and heal the wounds sustained from decades of colonialism and racism. Surely this important task of nation-building requires that Namibia should be ensured continued stability in full unity and territorial integrity, as provided by the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions of the Security Council.

Over the years, as more and more colonial Territories on its agenda have become independent, the Special Committee has taken great pride in contributing to the enlargement of the membership of the United Nations. As we observe the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration and begin the decade devoted to the eradication of colonialism, Namibia's assumption of its rightful place in our

(Mr. Tadesse, Chairman, Special Committee of 24)

Organization no doubt provides added impetus to the decolonization process. Rejoicing in this historic event, the Special Committee considers it fitting to call for continued efforts to assist the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories so that the United Nations can hasten the achievement of one of its fundamental objectives: universality.

In conclusion, I should like to pay a deserved tribute to the Secretary-General for his perseverance against immense difficulties and express our appreciation to the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), and to all others involved in the process, for their valuable contribution to Namibia's independence.

I once again congratulate Prime Minister Hage Geingob, and through him the Namibian Government and people, and wish them success as they set out to build their new nation.

Mr. ZUZE (Zambia), President of the United Nations Council for Namibia: This day marks a special occasion in the history of the United Nations. Today, Namibia, a Territory for which the United Nations assumed direct responsibility more than two decades ago, is being admitted into the community of nations. This brings us a step further towards the realization of the cardinal principle of universality in the membership of the United Nations.

I wish in this regard, Sir, and on behalf of the United Nations Council for Namibia, to say how happy we are to see you, a distinguished son of Africa, presiding over the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly. Your country, Nigeria, together with the front-line States, has for a long time played a significant role in the struggle for the independence of Namibia.

(Mr. Zuze, President, United Nations Council for Namibia)

May I take the liberty to welcome in our midst the Republic of Namibia. I do so cognizant of the fact that the will of the international community to see Namibia liberated has been fulfilled. The Council for Namibia cannot but salute all those who made the independence of Namibia possible. We are happy that at long last Namibia has taken its rightful place in this body. Its participation in the work of the United Nations will indeed enrich our deliberations.

It is with the greatest sense of pride and satisfaction that I extend a warm and sincere welcome to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, Mr. Hage Geingob, and the Foreign Minister, my brother Theo Ben-Gurirab. Their presence at this historic session of the General Assembly is clear testimony of the importance Namibia attaches to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Namibia's independence attests to the success of the United Nations. Indeed, it is, to all intents and purposes, the success of multilateralism. And in these days of rapprochement, we cannot but express the hope that multilateral efforts will be crowned with success in other conflict situations.

To the Council for Namibia, this day represents a very historic and joyous moment. Namibia, a child of the international community, has gained adulthood. To many who participated in the work of the Council, it is a dream come true. It is beyond the power of words to express adequately the jubilation that the States members of the Council for Namibia feel on this momentous occasion.

Since the establishment of the Council in May 1967, we have waited for the moment when Namibia would assume its rightful place among the family of nations. For 23 years the Council has engaged in programmes to mobilize international support for, and solidarity with, the struggling people of Namibia, and to assist

(Mr. Zuze, President, United Nations Council for Namibia)

the growing number of Namibians who were forced to flee from persecution in their country and seek sanctuary elsewhere.

In the fulfilment of its mandate, the Council consulted broadly with Governments and other parties concerned, throughout the world, to seek greater support for the cause of Namibia and to review all the measures that had to be taken to promote the implementation of United Nations resolutions regarding the Territory. The Council also kept under continuous review the political, economic, social and military developments in the Territory which affected the struggle of the Namibian people for freedom and independence.

Alarmed by the revelations of the rape and plunder of Namibia's natural resources, the Council took specific steps to protect the natural wealth of Namibia by enacting in September 1974 the now famous Decree No. 1 "for the Protection of the Natural Resources of Namibia". To give effect to that Decree, the Council decided in 1985, after years of careful study and preparation, to take legal action in the domestic courts of States against those corporations and individuals involved in the exploitation, transport, processing or purchase of Namibia's natural resources. Since the Council's mandate effectively ended at the time of the independence of Namibia, it remains for the Government of the Republic of Namibia to take whatever further action it deems necessary in the furtherance of this matter.

(Mr. Zuze, President, United Nations Council for Namibia)

The road to Namibia's independence has been long and arduous. For more than a century Namibians have struggled, by diplomatic, political and all other means at their disposal, including armed struggle, for freedom and self-determination under the leadership of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). We salute them for their courage, determination and heroism. It was their heroic resistance, bolstered by the support of the international community, that led to their independence under the United Nations Settlement Plan embodied in Security Council resolution 435 (1978). The successful implementation of resolution 435 (1978) has thus brought an end to the colonial situation in Namibia and an end to colonialism on the continent of Africa.

The Territory's independence and its admission to the United Nations are clearly a cause for celebration. Yet we must not forget that the problems of Namibia are far from over. After decades of struggle against the ravages of apartheid and colonialism the crucial tasks of rehabilitation and national development are just beginning. We therefore appeal to the international community to extend its co-operation and assistance to Namibia, either through multilateral forums or through bilateral channels. Namibia will need substantial external help in restructuring its economy and providing the population as a whole with new economic and social possibilities. A comprehensive international aid programme will thus be essential for the country to consolidate its newly independent status, stabilize its finances and generate sustainable growth.

The Republic of Namibia has now joined the United Nations and the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) and will soon formalize its membership in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and a number of other international and intergovernmental organizations. The mandate entrusted to the Council for Namibia by the world community has been fulfilled, and we have recommended to the General Assembly our

(Mr. Zuze, President, United Nations Council for Namibia)

own dissolution. However, we cannot fail to note that Namibia's sovereignty over Walvis Bay and the offshore islands is still being disputed by South Africa. We therefore urge the Security Council and the General Assembly to reiterate their positions on these important matters and to compel South Africa to abide by the will of the international community and thus ensure the territorial integrity of Namibia.

Namibia's independence has shifted the struggle against apartheid to within South Africa's own boundaries. The Pretoria régime has in recent weeks professed a desire for positive change in its racist policies and has taken some small steps towards that end. But much more needs to be done. The valiant struggle of the people of Namibia conclusively proved the irresistible trend of history that the just struggle of oppressed peoples eventually triumphs. The forces of colonialism, exploitation and racism which relentlessly try to obstruct that historical trend are doomed to failure, and we firmly believe that Namibia's independence has spelt doom for apartheid and has brought closer the day of liberation for South Africa's oppressed people.

As we rejoice today, we must also remember those who gave their very best along the road to independence. The silent soldiers who perished in the struggle paid dearly for the liberation of their motherland. We must also recall those who died while still in our midst, and memory bows for a moment at the names of Sean MacBride and Bernt Carlsson, two of our Commissioners, and of Rego Monteiro, one of our outstanding Secretaries. Let us remember the men and women whom the Council was able to reach and to persuade - the scholars and statesmen, the writers and readers, the trade unionists and the churchmen, and our many shared moments of companionship and camaraderie, of friendship forged in the furnace of a mission sustained by our many individual selves. Let us recall the love and laughter that infused our work, the many personal friendships that the sharing of this cause and

(Mr. Zuze, President, United Nations Council for Namibia)

the harmony of our work together afforded. Let us remember how the fire of our determination forged the steel of solidarity amongst all of us, distant though our nations may have been, unhappy as relations between us may have been on occasion. Namibia made us one.

At this solemn moment I wish to extend once again our warm greetings and welcome to Namibia, the one hundred and sixtieth Member of the United Nations. Namibia's unhappy past is a nightmare and is now forever behind it. Ahead is a dream and a future of glorious opportunities. We wish the Government and people of Namibia great success in the arduous tasks of social and economic development and nation-building, as well as in their efforts to consolidate peace, security and justice in southern Africa.

It is now my distinct privilege and honour to express our deep appreciation to His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his untiring efforts to bring about Namibia's freedom and national independence. His was a difficult assignment, and we commend him most sincerely. We also recognize the important role played by the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), comprising thousands of international military, police and civilian personnel who worked ceaselessly to realize Namibia's national independence.

As the old adage goes: "All's well that ends well."

Mr. PICKERING (United States of America): On behalf of the host country, it is a great pleasure to welcome the representatives of the Government of the newly independent Republic of Namibia. We are especially proud to join in sponsoring Namibia's accession to membership in the United Nations.

The Secretary-General and his Special Representative, as well as all of the personnel of the United Nations Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) and the United Nations Secretariat, have worked tirelessly to help the Namibian people join the

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

United Nations as an independent and sovereign nation. We congratulate those involved in helping to reach this proud moment.

The road to Namibia's independence was long and sometimes rocky. However, neither the people of Namibia, not the world community nor my own Government ever gave up hope that Namibia would achieve nationhood with a democratically elected Government. The Administrations of three successive American Presidents worked diligently in the negotiating process and elsewhere to achieve this goal. My Government will support and encourage this new democracy as it establishes a democratic, peaceful and prosperous nation for all of its citizens.

The United States has been engaged in the cause of Namibian independence since the early part of this century. President Wilson's suggestions led to the establishing of the mandate system under the League of Nations, which guaranteed separate territorial identity of the former German colony of South West Africa. Following the Second World War we advocated Namibian independence and opposed all annexation efforts with vigour and determination. The United States played an important role in helping to fashion United Nations Security Council resolution 435 (1978), the blueprint for Namibia's independence. We are proud of the mediating role which we played in the negotiations that led to the New York Accords, which enabled the implementation of that resolution, and I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for mentioning several of our American colleagues by name for their contribution to this great effort.

The Namibian people are to be commended for their fairness, patience and perseverance during the transition process. The United Nations-monitored, democratic elections, with 97 per cent of the voting population turning out at the polls, offer a model for the rest of the world.

(Mr. Pickering, United States)

Great strides toward democracy are being made these days around the globe, as former closed societies open their doors to popular participation. As these nations set the stage for democracy, they can look to the new Republic of Namibia with esteem, with respect and with admiration as a pace-setter in the conduct of free and fair elections. The last colony in Africa is now a republic, a sovereign State in its own right, with a multiparty democracy.

Namibia's admission to the United Nations affirms its successful quest for freedom and for self-determination. Congratulations to you, Prime Minister Geingob, and to all the Namibian people on this historic day. There is no better way to bring in this new decade of the 1990s than with the birth of a proud new nation and its inclusion in the United Nations as the newest full Member of the Organization.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, His Excellency Mr. Hage Geingob.

Mr. Hage Geingob, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, and I invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. GEINGOB (Namibia): The poverty of language makes it impossible for me to express clearly in words how honoured and privileged I am to have been accorded this rare opportunity - indeed one incapable of repetition - of leading the delegation of Namibia to the United Nations for admission.

I stand before you in all humility, Mr. President, you a son of that great country Nigeria, which because of its close association with the struggle in southern Africa came to be known as a front-line State. What a palatable conspiracy of circumstances it is, therefore, to see you presiding over this

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

special session of the General Assembly where Namibia is admitted as the one hundred and sixtieth Member of the United Nations. We are immensely indebted to you for your well-known consummate diplomatic skills, which undoubtedly made Namibia's admission today possible.

Mr. Secretary-General, allow me to express the Namibian people's appreciation to you personally for your unwavering support for their cause. When elected, you promised to make the Namibian question one of the priorities during your term of office. It is a pleasure, therefore, to note that under your stewardship the biggest United Nations operation ever mounted proved a success and resulted in Namibia's taking its rightful place in the community of nations. I am reminded of one colonial mayor of Windhoek in the 1970s who argued in a television interview that the United Nations had never anywhere in the world carried out any project successfully. For you it must have been a harvest of happiness, therefore, to see the United Nations preside over Namibia's peaceful transition to independence. The United Nations without a doubt faced a lot of resentment from those opposed to change in Namibia, but with the help of the majority of the people of Namibia it pulled off the big one.

It would be a derilection of duty on my part if I did not place on record our appreciation to the Security Council for favourably recommending to the General Assembly to admit Namibia. It was resolution 435 (1978), the Council's brainchild, that led to Namibia's peaceful transition to statehood. It must have felt a great deal of frustration during the 10 years of non-implementation after resolution 435 was adopted, in 1978. But now, with Namibia's independence, the long hours it spent and the patient diplomacy it engaged in on the Namibian question have not been in vain. Many thanks go also to the General Assembly, which has remained seized of the Namibian question since its inception, and particularly since South

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

Africa's Mandate over Namibia was terminated, in 1966. It is my sincere hope and belief that with its admission today Namibia will cease to be a perennial question on the agenda of the General Assembly.

Let me also seize this opportunity to express our whole-hearted appreciation to the front-line States and the States members of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries for having played a vital role in the decolonization of Namibia. We pay a similar deserved tribute to all other countries that stood firm with us in our struggle for freedom and justice. In addition, our tribute goes to the entire United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Council for Namibia.

The new State of Namibia applied for membership of the United Nations under Article 4 of the Charter as, in its view, it fulfils all the requisite conditions for membership. Namibia has a small but vibrant population - of about 1.5 million; it has a clearly defined territory, which consists of the whole of the territory recognized by the international community through the organs of the United Nations as Namibia, including the enclave, harbour and port of Walvis Bay as well as the off-shore islands of Namibia; and its southern boundary extends to the middle of the Orange River. It has a democratically elected executive President and a Government which derive legitimacy from the will of the people. Namibia has the capacity to enter into relations with other States; as a matter of fact, over 80 sovereign States either have expressed interest in or have already entered into bilateral agreements with the Republic of Namibia - a fact which demonstrates the international community's confidence in our young Republic. The people of Namibia desire peace. Therefore, the new State of Namibia pledges to live at peace with its neighbours; it accepts as sacrosanct and will fufil all obligations attendant upon its becoming a Member of the world body.

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

The Constitution of Namibia, woven and crafted with meticulous care, is the pride of most Namibians, as it is homegrown and reflects the compromises achieved by Namibia's Constitution-makers in a spirit of give and take. We take justifiable pride in the fact that, second only perhaps to the United States of America, we had the rare opportunity without outside interference, but under the watchful eye of the international community, to sit down and draft our own Constitution.

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

The foundation stone of that Constitution is the recognition and jealous protection of fundamental human rights. Our Constitution is audacious enough to outlaw the death penalty. It recognizes the rights of children and guarantees political opposition under a mutli-party democracy. It gives me immense pride, therefore, to announce to the General Assembly that on this historic occasion I am heading a governmental, all-party parliamentary and trade union delegation, now also joined by the business community. That is a clear recognition of the political diversity of our society. We are committed to building a democracy in which violent confrontation and the politics of hatred will be things of the past, a democracy in which the concept of reconcfliation is already slowly but decidedly permeating the social fabric and the political lexicon of our society.

Lest I be misunderstood, I wish to place on record that to us, the Government of the day, reconciliation does not mean the continuation of the status quo. We have inherited a skewed economy riddled with imbalances and lopsidedness. The country is racially stratified, with the whites enjoying relative prosperity while the majority of the blacks live in grotesque poverty. The challenge facing us, therefore, is to achieve a healthy balance between political and economic reconciliation. The two go hand in glove, and we are committed to achieving both, not one at the expense of the other.

Globally, not least in southern Africa, the scale of human suffering has escalated by leaps and bounds, at times because of conflict that can be overcome through dialogue and discourse. With regard to South Africa specifically, it is our fervent hope that Namibia's experience will serve as an encouragement to the people of that sister country to end apartheid and bring about a non-racial democratic society.

(Mr. Geingob, Namibia)

We are a small nation of limited means but we stand ready to take our place among the nations of the world to contribute positively towards the realization of those most attractive ideals of the human race - world peace and harmony - through the United Nations, the greatest international experiment in peace, co-operation and hope.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Hage Geingob, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted from the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I should like to announce that the flag of Namibia will be raised at a ceremony that will take place immediately after the adjournment of the meeting, in front of the delegates' entrance.

That concludes our consideration of agenda item 10, on the admission of Namibia to membership of the United Nations. Before we begin the general debate, the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, wishes to address the Assembly, and I now call on him.

STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The SECRETARY-GENERAL (interpretation from Spanish): This special session of the General Assembly has been convened at a particularly appropriate time. For the first time since the Second World War, there is an extraordinary convergence of views on the most critical issues faced by the international community. That augurs well for the deliberations of the General Assembly, which, under your able guidance, Mr. President, will address questions of crucial importance for the economic well-being and situation of the international community. I need hardly say that the success achieved by the present session will have positive and long-ranging effects on international relations as a whole.

(The Secretary-General)

Despite the many difficulties we face today, the last decade of this century is full of promise and hope. Thanks to outstanding events that have taken place in the political international arena, especially the renewed process of democratization, the reduction of rivalry between the super-Powers, the improvement in relations between East and West, and the sincere quest for solutions to regional conflicts, the possibility now exists to change forever the basis of international relations which had come to be considered permanent in the post-war period. They clearly point to the possibility of achieving stable global peace. The opportunity of the kind that has now been provided by the dynamics of human affairs had not occurred in our age. It needs to be fully grasped if international security is to be broadened, made truly collective, and given a lasting foundation.

The past decade witnessed political, economic, social, environmental and technological currents that cut across national boundaries. The increased international flow of people, goods, finance and ideas has given real meaning to the term "globalization". It has reduced the mental distance between societies and shown much political discord in the world to be a product of out-worn concepts and attitudes. It has also led to a narrowing of differences stemming from economic philosophies.

It is ironic, however, that along with that creative historical process there has also been a movement in the opposite direction. I refer to the widening of the gaps in economic and social well-being around the world. The developed market economies are enjoying an unprecedented period of expansion, while only a few developing countries have been able to achieve and maintain high levels of growth. But for most developing countries the 1980s brought no genuine economic betterment. Indeed, the economies of many of those countries stagnated or

(The Secretary-General)

declined. Some of them were already among the world's poorest. Without a reversal in their downward spiral, those countries, and indeed whole regions, will be even more economically marginalized. Millions will be added to the more than 1 billion people already living in abject poverty. Is it acceptable that, in today's prosperous world, millions of children should die every year from starvation or malnutrition, or that most people in the developing world should not even have safe drinking water?

The developed countries cannot isolate themselves from those realities. The consequences of the economic and social retrogression in developing countries are already touching lives elsewhere. The drug epidemic now threatening the world has been aggravated by the deteriorating situation in the developing countries. The increase in the flow of migrants within as well as among countries has been another manifestation of this phenomenon.

(The Secretary-General)

The political maturity that is reflected in the recent developments that I mentioned earlier will, of course, help to bring about a lasting peace, but it alone cannot guarantee peace. Peace needs to be securely anchored in a strong bedrock of economic and social justice world-wide. The United Nations Charter takes full account of this requirement when, in Article 55, it refers to "conditions of stability and well-being which are necessary for peaceful and friendly relations among nations". It is, therefore, a matter of the greatest concern that, despite the global effects of the deteriorating economic situation in most nations since the early 1980s, no serious effort has been made to initiate a broad-based dialogue on international economic co-operation. This special session provides Member States with the opportunity to correct this anomaly, which indeed amounts to a lamentable failure.

In recent months, Member States have laboured hard to lay a solid foundation for the success of this session. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Constantine Zepos of Greece, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, who has done much to prepare the final document of the special session. All others who have contributed to the preparatory process also deserve our appreciation.

The preparations for this special session prompted, quite naturally, a further discussion of the reasons for the economic slowdown that has beset so many countries in the world. Those who have been unaffected tend to think that economic decline is due essentially to poor domestic management. Those who have suffered economic retrogression are inclined to argue that their misfortunes are the result of international factors that are generally beyond their control. Experience has surely demonstrated that both points of view have some elements of truth. Developing countries, lacking the economic resilience of more advanced societies, cannot prosper in an adverse international environment. At the same time, all countries must pursue sound domestic policies if they are to utilize the

(The Secretary-General)

opportunities available. Both conditions are necessary; neither condition alone is sufficient.

Over the past several years, I have noticed an increasing determination, particularly on the part of the developing countries, to strengthen their national economic policies. In many countries, the growth and development process could be helped by a better ordering of priorities, by the introduction of improvements in economic management and by the existence of a standard of administrative efficiency and effectiveness, especially in countries with a shortage of resources. However, it is useless to put stress on such measures without also addressing the fundamental causes of underdevelopment and overcoming the international factors that impede development.

We must recognize that domestic economic measures taken by large countries, or by a number of countries acting collectively, can impinge directly on the well-being of other countries, particularly the smallest ones. For example, the benefits that developing countries can obtain from adjusting their own agricultural prices will be compromised when agriculture in most industrialized countries is heavily subsidized. Similarly, the efforts of developing countries to open their markets and become more outward-looking will be frustrated if international trade continues to be hampered by a wide variety of restrictive arrangements. One of the objectives of this special session should be to chart a course for greater fairness and coherence in global economic policy-making.

In seeking to improve the international economic environment, there are a number of critical issues that must be faced squarely. Governments must create an open and equitable international trading régime. A firm political commitment by major trading countries is needed to ensure that the Uruguay Round negotiations will enhance the trade and development possibilities of developing countries.

(The Secretary-General)

In the matter of commodities, the need for strengthened international co-operation is paramount, particularly in addressing the problems faced by developing countries. There must also be improvements in the flow of technology, so that all countries can make the best use of their physical and human resources, and we must ensure that developing countries have the financial resources necessary to avail themselves of these opportunities.

It is in this last context that we must address the question of the net transfer of financial resources from developing countries. Currently, developing countries are transferring about $30 billion annually to the developed countries. One of the natural results has been a decline in investment, which directly damages those countries' prospects for future development. This clearly runs counter to the principles of international co-operation for development.

Since 1982, international organizations, Governments of both debtor and creditor countries, private-sector banks and economic analysts have been addressing the problem of external indebtedness which confronts more than half the countries represented here. On previous occasions I have expressed my appreciation of the various initiatives, such as the Brady plan, which have been taken to defuse the international debt crisis. However, the fact remains that the total debt of the developing countries rose from some $750 billion at the end of 1982 to almost $1,200 billion last December. This increase was not, as some might suppose, a reflection of the willingness of banks to lend to credit-worthy customers. On the contrary, most of it was lending and borrowing entered into reluctantly by both parties in recognition of the fact that neither had much choice.

It has become obvious that we must remove the exorbitant burden of earlier loans. Present efforts for debt reduction and debt-service reduction must be pursued vigorously, underpinned with larger resources and extended to a larger

(The Secretary-General)

number of countries. This will require a major effort, and it is for this reason that I have requested the distinguished Italian statesman, Mr. Bettino Craxi, to act as my personal representative on debt. Mr. Craxi is consulting with all interested parties, and I am certain that his efforts will contribute to an effective resolution of this problem.

One of the lessons of the 1980s, and surely one of the causes of the changes that took place at the end of the decade, was the need to recognize the decisive role of the human factor in the development process. Economic growth has little value unless it can provide adequate food, health and shelter for the world's population. At the same time, in the more complex and interdependent world of today, the development of human resources must be a central feature of efforts for economic development in the 1990s.

(The Secretary-General)

Our planet is suffering from the burden we are imposing on its physical superstructure. An ever-expanding population that produces and consumes in ever growing amounts is threatening the very existence of future generations. Underdevelopment and poverty have damaged the environment, as have profligate production and consumption by the rich. Living generations have no licence to endanger the life prospects of future generations. We must achieve a better balance between population growth, resource utilization and the protection of the environment. Tackling this problem is an enormously complex task unprecedented in human history; but we cannot shirk it. The Conference on environment and development to be held in Brazil in 1992 will provide a major opportunity to address this challenge in a comprehensive and unequivocal manner.

To recognize the multiplicity of humanity's current problems is an important first step towards their solution. Mobilizing the resources to meet them is itself another challenge. However, the special session is taking place at a time when Governments around the world are reconsidering the uses to which they put their resources. The reduction in the number of armed conflicts and the relaxation of political tensions, in particular if reinforced by concrete arms reduction agreements, will provide Governments with an opportunity to reallocate resources from military purposes to pressing economic, social and environmental needs that they all recognize.

For the past two generations the developed countries have spent vastly more on nuclear armaments than on protecting the physical environment. But today the environmental threat looms as large as the nuclear danger. Among the developing countries there are many whose military outlays far exceed what they spend on health and education. Despite the lessening of regional conflicts, world military expenditures in 1989 is estimated to have been close to a trillion dollars - approximately the same as the total external debt of the developing countries.

(The Secretary-General)

Continued political efforts, including the expanded use of this Organization's international security and peace-keeping roles, can contain the threat of war. Nevertheless, unless specific measures are initiated substantially to cut world production and trade in arms the benefits from the reduction in tension may prove to be chimerical. Commitments are needed to convert armaments industries to non-defence production and to give higher priority to the economic and social programmes in national budgets.

The restructuring of the political systems and economies that is being carried out by the countries of Eastern Europe should lead in the not-too-distant future to the growth of their markets, thus facilitating exports from developing countries and the greater participation of these countries in the effort of the international community to provide assistance to the developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, in their undertaking to make up lost time. There is reason to be optimistic with regard to active participation by the countries of Eastern Europe in the decision-making process affecting our small and shrinking planet.

At the time of the establishment of the United Nations Governments had a clear perception of the world's future need for international economic co-operation, and hence created the Bretton Woods institutions. Those institutions will continue to serve as solid foundations for co-operation in their spheres of competence.

But much has changed in 45 years. New problems have emerged and new tasks have been added. The time has come for international financial institutions and Governments to reflect on the experiences of the past in order to develop, based on a new vision of the future, more favourable conditions for multilateral development co-operation.

Responding to these challenges and seizing these opportunities will require an extensive international effort. This special session may not be able to deal with

(The Secretary-General)

all the technical aspects of these myriad issues, but we can and should agree on the fundamental principles and measures of international economic co-operation. This would also help us guide the deliberations relating to the elaboration of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth Development Decade, the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the Eighth United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

We shall to some extent be venturing into the unknown. I firmly believe the time has come to be bold. Success requires that we be more forward and outward looking than our cautious human and political nature normally allows. Addressing the complex issues and bringing together the varying views on how to confront the challenges ahead is a daunting task. However, the current mood of rationality suggests that we have progressed beyond sterile ideological debate. We are in a position to agree on ways and means of achieving sustained and equitable economic growth. At the same time we have to address such urgent and fundamental issues as explosive population growth, the environmental degradation of our planet and respect for human rights.

For over 40 years this Organization has been a catalyst for change and transformation in global affairs. It is now being given new and extraordinary responsibilities in world affairs, as envisaged by its founders. We should set ourselves a programme of work for the 1990s, an agreed-upon global agenda. The United Nations in all its parts must remain relevant, efficient and effective. We have a unique opportunity. We should not shy away.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I thank the Secretary-General for his very important statement.

AGENDA ITEMS 8 AND 9

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT: We shall now begin the general debate. In accordance with the decision just taken by the General Assembly, the Assembly will also consider agenda item 9.

Before calling on the first speaker, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate be closed this afternoon at 6 p.m.

If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

I now call on the first speaker in the general debate, the representative of Bolivia, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77.

Mr. GARCIA (Bolivia) (interpretation from Spanish): Bolivia is honoured to begin the debate at this special session at a time when the topic of the relationship between international co-operation and economic growth and development is coming to the fore.

On behalf of the Group of 77, and on behalf of the Government and people of Bolivia, I wish to extend a welcome to the latest Member of the United Nations, the new State of Namibia. Its creation in the wake of a long struggle against oppression and discrimination clearly stands as a tribute to justice and freedom.

The Group of 77 also stands ready with open arms to welcome into its midst the State of Namibia, which we are confident will contribute to strengthening the Group and provide all of us with an occasion for rejoicing.

The Group of 77, over which Bolivia has the honour to preside, was the main initiator in the bringing about of this special session because we consider it essential that, in the decade we are now entering, yesterday's negative trends with regard to stability, growth and equity be reversed and that we embark upon the twenty-first century following a course that will revitalize the development process, thus in turn achieving a more just balance between nations.

The 1980s has been a traumatic decade for the majority of developing countries. Deterioration in the terms of trade, inflation, the debt crisis, the sudden decline in net flows of external capital and protectionism in the industrialized countries have combined to oblige the majority of developing countries to adopt prolonged and painful programmes of adjustment.

Those adjustment processes have sometimes been the outcome of governmental policy decisions and sometimes the automatic result of overriding economic realities. The effect, however, has been the same in virtually every case: a substantial reduction in consumption, savings, investment, employment and per capita income accompanied by a decline in the standard of living of the people.

(Mr. Garcia, Bolivia)

Thus the situation of the 1980s has contributed to widening the gap between the developing and the industrialized countries. The decade of the 1980s, which we in Latin America refer to as the wasted decade, must be put behind us. It has, however, left us with important lessons for the future, and it presents us with the challenge of finding innovative strategies to consolidate stability and advance towards economic growth, but qualitatively better economic growth. The efficient allocation of resources, technological improvement and its concomitant international competitiveness must combine with the creation of productive employment and enhancement of the human person as the goal and purpose of development. This all implies a better distribution of wealth, satisfaction of the basic needs of the people, the elimination of critical poverty and making use of the productive potential of human capital.

This strategy of renewal must also include environmental protection through endeavours of the industrialized and developing countries based on shared responsibility. The decade of the 1990s, the decade of hope, must also be a time for consolidating democracy, freedom and ideological pluralism as indispensable steps towards better systems for living.

These challenges will first and foremost require that the developing countries rely upon appropriate policies. The industrialized countries, for their part, must also have policies conducive to an international environment that encourages development.

If any progress was made in this regard during the wasted decade, it is that, by contrast with years past, there is now clear recognition and virtual consensus that appropriate macro-economic management is fundamental. But it is essential that there be symmetry between the actions of developed and industrialized countries if all of this is to be meaningful. There have been large budget

(Mr. Garcia, Bolivia)

deficits in some industrialized countries, reliance on monetary instruments to control inflation and the application of protectionist policies and unstable foreign-exchange markets, and all of these have contributed to aggravating the crisis of the 1980s.

Appropriate macro-economic management will no doubt have to be accompanied by appropriate development strategies and far-reaching structural change that will enable countries to adjust not only their policies and institutional frameworks but also the attitudes of their peoples.

Respecting the specificity and characteristics of each country, structural changes should seek freer interplay between supply and demand in determining prices, growing openness of the economy, the reduction and gradual elimination of subsidies and protectionist practices, and a new role for the State. The new State must be qualitatively better, seeking to remedy the shortcomings of the market and to guide the development process according to criteria of efficiency and equity.

But all of this is not enough to reactivate development in developing countries. Allow me to list, with no attempt to be exhaustive, only four of the obstacles requiring immediate attention: first, solving the debt problem; secondly, reversing protectionist practices; thirdly, applying policies and instruments that will make the terms of trade more stable; and, fourthly, increasing net flows of capital and making international co-operation more effective.

As to the question of debt, notwithstanding the advances achieved - the Brady Plan, greater flexibility in the Paris Club rules, including the Toronto treatment, and innovative agreements between developing countries - the debt burden continues to strain the investment capacity of developing countries.

Without investment there can be no growth, and without growth there can be no development. That is why this topic remains the centre-piece in restoring

(Mr. Garcia, Bolivia)

macro-economic equilibrium and moving towards development. The second topic, relating to protectionism, and the second, relating to the terms of trade, are undoubtedly crucial to achieving change in international economic relations and ushering in stability and economic growth. In this regard the speedy successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round is fundamental. We hope that, together with the foregoing, studies will be undertaken and agreements reached to give greater stability to the prices of the raw materials of developing countries. The fourth topic relates to increasing net capital flows. The drastic curtailment of those flows has turned many developing countries into what may more accurately be described as net exporters of capital. This is an intolerable situation that must be changed immediately.

In this regard, official development assistance should attain at least 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of the donor countries, a target set for the 1970s but never fulfilled except for some commendable exceptions. We must also insist that at least 20 per cent of that amount be for the benefit of the least developed countries.

Likewise it is important that multilateral organs such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and regional organizations play a growing role at this stage in the transition from stability to development. More resources are needed on concessional terms to that end.

With regard to flows of external private capital, we are aware that the pre-condition for restoring those flows to an appropriate level is solution of the debt problem. However, with regard to public credits of a commercial nature, and private credits enjoying public guarantees, mechanisms must be found for their immediate enhancement. One instrument that may foster this process is the promotion of co-financial mechanisms with the World Bank and the regional and subregional financing organs.

(Mr. Garcia, Bolivia)

Another crucial factor in enhancing capital flows is direct foreign investment. Attracting such investment depends upon an appropriate macroeconomic framework, transparent rules of the game in host countries, and policies and mechanisms in the industrialized countries that encourage investors.

I would not wish to conclude this statement without alluding to the experience of my country, which makes crystal-clear the traumatic effects of the wasted decade, the effort that the adjustment process has meant, and the difficulty inherent in making the transition from stability to economic growth.

At the beginning of the 1980s Bolivia had to contend with a dictatorial setting in which human rights were constantly violated and drug-trafficking had begun to take over the nation. No sooner had the country, at great sacrifice, embarked upon democratic life than it suffered the severe blow of deteriorating terms of trade and the rising cost of debt-service. Through the dislocations produced by this situation, Bolivia fell victim to unprecedented hyperinflation, with a steady decline in *per capita* income and in the population's standards of living.

However, the country shouldered its burden with maturity and determination. As a result, Bolivia today can point with pride to a consolidated democratic process, for three successive Governments have been elected by the will of the people during the last 10 years and, moreover, have assumed power as a result of agreement among the leading political forces.

Similarly, structural adjustment measures in Bolivia, after inflation had reached levels of more than 24,000 per cent annually, have made it possible for inflation in the last three years to be reduced to less than 20 per cent a year. Similarly, since 1987 we have reversed the conditions of negative growth in the economy, which for six consecutive years had brought about a reduction in *per capita* income of more than 26 per cent.

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The Government of President Jaime Paz Zamora has decided to consolidate stability and press forward with structural change. To that end, in consonance with the ideas of price deregulation and an open economy, an effort is under way to rationalize and trim the State and give greater impetus to private enterprise. At the same time, our Government takes a view of development which pursues growth together with social improvement.

With regard to lightening the debt burden, we have taken pioneering strides, as shown by our solution to the commercial debt and the imaginative agreements reached with Argentina and Brazil. Moreover, the recent Paris Club negotiations, under which Bolivia was granted "Toronto treatment", have made possible a substantial reduction in debt-servicing costs and significant balance-of-payments relief. We extend our appreciation to the member countries of the Paris Club for their constructive decision. At the same time, I wish to express the deep gratitude of President Paz Zamora and the people of Bolivia to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his invaluable personal endeavours on behalf of my country in obtaining the Toronto treatment.

I cannot fail to mention Bolivia's commitment to a comprehensive solution to the problem of drug-trafficking, a solution based on the principle of the shared responsibility of consumer and producer countries and on a search for solutions that will make it possible to develop substitute crops enjoying access to markets, while eradicating excessive planting and pursuing drug-trafficking interdiction activities.

As will be appreciated, in spite of all those efforts by country, it has had an uphill struggle in reversing the negative trends in economic growth. As a result, Bolivia can project no more than a modest growth of about 4 per cent in gross domestic product over the next three years, which is consistent with

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macroeconomic constraints. It is obvious that, in those circumstances, Bolivia will not see its per capita income restored to the level it enjoyed during the 1970s before the start of the next decade.

What I have said clearly illustrates clearly the urgent need to change the international rules of the game.

The experience of Bolivia and of the developing countries in general shows how deep is the people's yearning for improvement and social change. Let us not forget that a weariness has set in among the developing countries as a result of the continuous sacrifice demanded of their peoples through unremitting processes of adjustment.

In this context, I must emphasize the importance of global integration, international co-operation and the role of the United Nations in seeking a comprehensive solution to all those problems.

The Group of 77 approaches this session with high hopes, because, as I said at the beginning of my statement, it could be a historic crossroads, defining the future lines of international co-operation to stabilize the world economy, revitalize the development process and narrow the gaps that separate the poor countries from the rich, all of which are essential in order to consolidate ideological pluralism and democracy and in order to set the world on a course to a more prosperous and just twenty-first century.

The PRESIDENT: The next speaker is Mr. Budimir Loncar, Federal Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Yugoslavia, who will speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. LONCAR (Yugoslavia): It is a pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over this important special session.

My very first words and thoughts are addressed to the subject of Namibia. The independence of Namibia and its admission to membership of our Organization is a

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great event for the people of this youngest African State, for southern Africa, for the world at large and for the United Nations in particular. With it, the Non-Aligned Movement and the policy of non-alignment have realized one of their basic goals. It is also fitting on this occasion to pay tribute to the Secretary-General.

The coming together of two events - having Namibia as a new Member of the United Nations and holding the debate on international economic co-operation and development - has a deep symbolic meaning.

No one denies the historical fact that colonial times have left behind serious disparities in the world's economic and social development. What concerns us most is that they are widening at an accelerated rate in some areas and regions. The solemn event to which I have referred, which marks the end of a long era, itself dramatically warns us of the importance of this issue.

World developments have reached a crucial stage. We have entered a new historical scene, with a completely different political and spiritual map in its background.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

In the midst of these great changes and positive and - it is to be hoped - irreversible processes, we should figure out the place and role of the developing countries. Indeed, what are the prospects for the vast majority of mankind, who possess tremendous potential and yet, for the most part, are impoverished? This question looms large. The response must be both wise and prompt, practical and comprehensive. This is not impossible. Have we not already opened avenues of understanding? Do they not offer responses to confrontation and antagonism, to divisions based on the ideology and military doctrines of yesterday? Security and development are but two facets of a single whole: world stability.

We posed the same question in this forum 15 years ago. We rightly argued then that the problems of development would become the key issue of international peace and security, and that no partial solutions could be found to development problems. On the other hand, we were obviously not realistic in our belief that declarations could alter the pattern of economic relations in the world.

Global interdependence has become even more pronounced and complex today. The consequences of economic imbalances cut ever more deep, day after day. The focus on the relationships between East and West has been shifting to those between North and South, which have assumed the shape of growing economic dependence.

Economic integration is the dominant feature of our time. Its basic logic is growth and interdependence. Growth should, indeed, be the motto of this and the coming epoch. However, interdependence is not duly perceived on the world scale and in historical perspective. What would, for instance, isolated or restricted growth or development, at the expense of others, the weaker ones, amount to? It is evident that in the long run it would have a disintegrative effect and its main purpose, integration, would become the opposite, disintegration.

We have entered a stage when we can be more optimistic than ever before. There are new notions about the world economy and its reintegration. New options

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are emerging on the social and economic scene, and regional co-operation, which is essentially centripetal, should be conducive to wider fields of co-operation and integration. Integration of the most developed countries need not pose a threat to the less developed ones if it is based on the obvious logic of the interdependence of the world economy as a whole. Therefore I note with satisfaction that the Bonn Conference on economic co-operation in Europe recognized that increased economic co-operation within the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) should not detract from development co-operation and should include assistance to the developing countries. The fact that the developed countries, especially the European Community and Canada, have made significant contributions along that line inspires the hope that this special session will be marked by the efforts and desire of all to find a common denominator of interests and agree on further action.

Antagonisms, contradictions and the waste of enormous resources on competition and intimidation have given way to other preoccupations. Instead of the balance of power and fears, alternative new values are in the making; a new system of international security, and more reliable foundations of stability. I am sure that this session devoted to international economic co-operation and development can greatly contribute towards identifying where these foundations are to be sought, namely, in the new balance of interests, at the core of which lie the economic and social spheres.

The non-aligned countries have constantly given the same priorities to disarmament and development - to disarmament as the proper way of achieving economic prosperity. We have taken the path of disarmament. Is it not natural then to invest these capacities and potential, and above all, the resources, in development? The point is quite obvious. Development breeds development.

(Mr. Loncar, Yugoslavia)

Progress breeds progress. Whichever way we take, this two-way process completes a full circle. All of this calls for a global strategy, not only for economic development but also for the protection of the environment; for ensuring clean and renewable sources of energy; for dealing with population and social problems; for eradicating poverty; for combating drug abuse, terrorism and new mass diseases.

The existing multilateral mechanisms must be transformed into an instrument adequate to the present and future challenges. It goes without saying that the United Nations should be the cornerstone of this new structure of international relations.

It is clear that development can result only from a harmonious blend of national efforts and adjustment, on the one hand, and a supportive international environment on the other. In other words, we should all change. But in which direction? In the direction of development for all.

The non-aligned and other developing countries accept the responsibility for their own developments, and they unequivocally confirmed this at their Ninth Summit Conference. They are making tremendous efforts to mobilize human and material resources at a high social cost. They are ready to do even more. In many of them the processes of economic and social reform are already under way. Many have opened the doors to the criteria and standards imposed by the world market. But is it enough? The answer is no, unless, as I said earlier, more favourable international conditions are created. These imply, first and foremost, the following: first, resolution of the foreign-debt problem and a reversal of the negative net transfer of financial resources from developing countries; secondly, free access to markets through the reduction of protectionism, in particular the elimination of tariff barriers, or more favourable treatment for developing countries in areas such as services, trade-related investment measures, and intellectual property rights within the framework of the Uruguay Round;

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thirdly, revitalization of the North-South dialoque on the reactivation of development, as well as on other issues such as combatinq poverty, improved livinq conditions, development of human resources, the environment, communications, scientific and technological co-operation; and, fourthly, a special approach to the solution of problems facinq the least-developed countries.

The approach to the issue of North-South dialoque should take into account the interests of all. Solutions should be sought primarily on the basis of mutual benefit, as well as of equality and respect for national independence. New relations require changes to be made in the spirit of international solidarity and social and human justice.

It is only in this kind of world that the developinq countries can catch up with the world economic trends that will mark not only the last decade of this century but definitely the early years of the twenty-first century as well. That is why the new international strategy for the fourth United Nations development decade, which is currently beinq formulated, should ensure a coherent framework for all international activities in the economic field. The existinq economic and development institutions and organizations should play an important role in the elaboration and implementation of that strategy.

We are aware that one session cannot meet all expectations. However, if it qets to the core of the problem and provides an answer to at least one question - namely, how to open a development cycle in the interest of all - it may secure the key to all other doors, those leadinq to world stability and true democratization of international relations, which, in themselves, are inseparable from the economic and social spheres.

After all, have not human freedoms become the supreme value of this decade? Is not the individual, with his creative potential and dignity, the common

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denominator, over and above politics, ideology, religion and race? And yet that same individual is not able to rise above his economic and social environment. That environment can be his chance, but also his ill fate. If human freedoms are our ultimate goal and the individual the main link the human chain, then a chain reaction should be set off in the direction of development, the development of nations, countries, regions, the whole world without exception.

The PRESIDENT: The plenary meeting will start at exactly 3 o'clock this afternoon, and in view of the long list of speakers, I appeal to members once again to be punctual. I will take down the names of delegations that are here at 3.10.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.